



Guide to Home Composting

> What is home composting?

- It is the natural transformation process of plant-based organic waste (food scraps, vegetation, etc.).
- Under controlled conditions (humidity, aeration, etc.), the decomposition of these materials results in a natural and efficient fertilizer: compost.

> Why compost?

- By composting at home, you will divert approximately 165 kg of waste material per person per year from landfill.
- 48% of your household waste is composed of plant-based organic materials.
- Your greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced as composting does not produce methane, a gas that is 23 times more polluting than carbon dioxide.
- You can use your compost in your garden, on your lawn, for your flowerbeds, trees and indoor plants (ration: 3 soil to 1 compost).

> How to compost?

- With the help of a composter or in a pile. The advantages of a composter include: better control of heat and humidity and protection from animals.
- **The ratio of wet to dry materials is 2 to 1.**
Always finish with a layer of dry materials.
- The decomposition period varies depending on certain conditions, but if **you are careful to aerate your compost every 7 to 10 days, monitor its moisture content and alternate dry and wet materials**, it should be ready to use in less than 12 months.
- Small pieces (chopped food waste, shredded leaves) will decompose faster than larger ones.
- Composting can be practiced throughout the year; however, the decomposition of materials slows down over winter.

> What materials are compostable?

Wet or green materials (nitrogen-rich): fruit and vegetable peelings (all), eggshells (crushed), tea bags and herbal teas, coffee grounds (with filters), bread, pasta, rice, cereals, legumes, plants and flowers (annuals), stems and leaves, algae, etc.

Dry or brown materials (carbon-rich): dead leaves, straw, nutshells, garden soil (in small quantities), potting soil, dried flowers, sawdust (untreated wood), small branches and twigs, shredded cardboard contaminated with food waste, paper and cardboard, paper napkins, natural fabrics (linen, cotton, wool), etc.

Materials to avoid: meats, fish, bones, dairy products, fats and oils, animal waste and litter, weeds and seeds, diseased plants, rhubarb leaves, leaves containing tannins (oak leaves), ashes, grass, chemicals, etc.

> Starting up in 3 easy steps



- 1) Find a location for the container.
 - Ideally located close to the house
 - Well drained soil
 - Semi-shaded area



- 2) Prepare the base.
 - Turn the soil until the ground is soft and loose.

- For wooden composters (to ensure good aeration at the base):
- Create a nest of small branches (about 2 inches in diameter).
 - Add a layer of dead leaves.



- 3) Install the container.



> Production and maintenance: 3 easy steps



- Alternate adding dry and green compostable materials (2:1 ratio).
- Keep the compost moist to the touch.
- Aerate compost every 7 to 10 days.
 - **Perforate** the compost with an aerator or a stick in a cross-shaped pattern in order to allow the air to infiltrate.



Aeration prevents odours and accelerates decomposition.

However, excessive mixing can result in heat loss and the slowing down of decomposition.



The compost is ready when it looks and smells like soil.

> Tips and Tricks



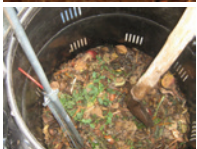
- In the fall, fill some bags with dead leaves that have preferably been shredded by a mower. This will serve as a reserve of dry material.
- In the spring, turn the compost completely by mixing the dead leaves with the moist material deposited over the winter.



- **Small flies:** Place a layer of dry material on top of the composter, if necessary, use newsprint or corrugated cardboard.



- **Odours:**
 - Avoid adding materials that do not compost.
 - Aerate regularly (turning completely if necessary).
 - Check the carbon-nitrogen balance (2:1 dry/wet matter).
 - Control moisture (mildew smells like rot).
 - Avoid adding grass (prioritize grasscycling), or add in small quantities (alternating thin layers of grass with dry material).



- **If the compost seems dry (slow decomposition)**
 - Remove the cover during a light rain.
 - Pour in cooking water (rich in minerals).
 - Add water with a watering can.
 - Add nitrogen-rich material (e.g. grass in small quantities).



- **If the compost is too wet (risk of mold):**
 - Add dead leaves and turn it over completely.
- **Major problems:** Turn the compost over completely.